

The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 14, Vol. ii.]

BELFAST, FEBRUARY 1st, 1882,

[For Gratuitous Circulation

SINCE our last issue the Depository has been removed from Donegall Street to more central premises, No. 16 Queen's Arcade. We hope all our friends will note the change of address, and soon become familiar with the New Premises.

We observe that the Non-Subscribing Association has arranged for the delivery of a course of Tuesday Evening Lectures, in the Working Men's Institute, Belfast. Two of the Lectures have already been delivered, one by Rev. W. Napier, and one by Rev. J. Miskimmin. The attendance was not large. We hope that some good may result from these Lectures; but perhaps more might have followed from their delivery in such places as Lisburn, Lurgan, Ballymena, Coleraine, and Derry. Inquirers in Belfast have a good opportunity of hearing the principles of free religion expounded, and a large number avail themselves of the opportunity every Sunday evening.

Since the return of the Rev. J. C. Street to Belfast, he has resumed his Sunday Evening Lectures in Rosemary Street, and has been welcomed by large audiences, who have attended weekly. On Sunday, January 1st, his subject was "The New Year and the New Work." On the 8th he gave an interesting account of "Religion in the East," and especially in Asia-Minor and Turkey in Europe. On the 15th he gave the result of his personal observations of the various "Christian Missions in Smyrna," the second city of the Turkish Empire, and the seat of one of the Seven Churches. On the 22nd he drew attention to the Jewish people, and the persecutions they have endured for ages, and laid especial stress on the recent outbursts of fanaticism against them in Germany and Russia; and on the 29th he reviewed Canon Farrar's new book, on "Mercy and Judgment," showing the halting and timidity which characterised even so pronounced a Theologian, on the subject of the future life. It was gratifying to see such large audiences gathered on these occasions, and

the deep interest manifested in the preacher's treatment of his various themes.

We have noticed, with a good deal of pleasure, a correspondence in the *Banbridge Chronicle*, between the Rev. R. R. Kane, and "J," on "The Claims and Pretensions of the Priesthood." Mr. Kane is a zealous and somewhat fanatical clergyman of the Militant school, and seems to have a mission to smite hip and thigh every Roman Catholic he meets. He made a great onslaught on the Rev. W. M'Cartan, P.P., whose priestly assumptions horrified him. So far, so good. But "J" stepped into the field, and sent a javelin straight through the joints of Mr. Kane's armour, by showing that he also belonged to a Church, which claimed for its priesthood the power to forgive sins. This was too much for the Protestant divine. He burst forth into fury and vulgarity. But the incident showed that the critic could not bear to be criticised, and illustrated the adage, "that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones." "J" may be a Churchman, but if so, he is a member of a more Catholic Church than that of Rome or Ireland! He has done good service.

We would again remind our readers that the Subscriptions to the Society are now over-due, and should be paid as early as possible, to enable the Treasurer to meet the regular demands upon the Society.

THE second half of the 10th Session of the Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association opened on Monday evening, the 9th January, with a Soiree and Welcome to the President, the Rev. J. C. Street. Tea was provided in the School-room from seven till eight o'clock. Shortly after eight the company adjourned to the Lecture Hall, which looked quite gay with Christmas decorations. On the motion of Mr. J. R. Neill, seconded by Mr. E. A. Fuhr, the Chair was taken by Mr. J. M. Darbishire, (Vice-President,) who, in a few remarks, explained the main object of the meeting, and then proposed, on behalf of the Members of

the Association, a resolution of welcome to Rev. J. C. Street, congratulating him on his safe return, and comparatively restored health and vigour. The following is a copy of the Resolution:—"That we, the Vice-Presidents, Managing Committee, and Members of the Mutual Improvement Association, hail with delight the return amongst us of our highly esteemed President (Rev. J. C. Street); we beg leave to tender him our hearty congratulations on his comparatively restored health and vigour, and fondly pray for a continuance of God's blessing upon him in the renewal of his strength; we gladly avail ourselves of this opportunity to wish him many happy returns of this season." The motion was ably seconded by Mr. Thomas McClelland, J.P., and supported by Messrs. George Fisher, Robert McCalmont, F.C.S., Hugh Hyndman, LL.B., Edward Gardner, LL.B., and E. A. Fuhr. Mr. Street, in replying, thanked the meeting for the hearty welcome he had received, and went on to give some incidents of his travels in the East, and hoped, at some future time, to be able to give the Society a more detailed account of the different places he had visited. A number of new members were then enrolled, after which a select programme of music was rendered by Miss Darbishire, Miss Fisher, Messrs. E. A. Fuhr, and H. Galloway. The meeting was large and representative, and those present seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

On Monday evening, January 16th, a Paper, on "Hamburg" was contributed by Mr. Henry Aston. Mr. Aston described, with considerable humour, his own experiences of Hamburg, and Hamburg life. A discussion on the Paper followed.

On Monday evening, January 23rd, an interesting Paper was read by Mr. A. J. Liversedge, on "The Irish agitation from an English point of view." The Essayist treated of the Land and Land League agitation, from the standpoint taken by the majority of English Liberals. An animated debate on the Paper ensued.

At Rademon, on Sunday morning, January 8th, the Rev. John A. Kelly distributed premiums in Books, to 23 scholars, who, by good attendance, good conduct, and careful preparation of lessons, had entitled themselves to such. The roll showed that several scholars attended every Sunday without a single exception.

It may be mentioned that last year an experiment was tried for the first time in keeping the School open during the winter months, and resulted in an attendance so encouraging, that again this year the same thing was continued, with, so far, more than equal success.

BOOK NOTICE.

Revised Texts and Margins, BY DR. VANCE SMITH.

A timely and useful book. Dr. Vance Smith was a member of the Revision Committee, and has a well-earned reputation for accurate scholarship. To those who are interested in knowing how the ordinary doctrines of Christendom are affected by the Revised New Testament, this is a capital hand-book. The writer goes through the common proof-texts, and points out the changes introduced, which, considering the Theology of the Revisers, are striking and somewhat bold. Nothing but the necessities of the case, surely, could have made them alter and delete so many doctrinal texts, and yet, here and there, are there not signs of weakness and leaning? Often, indeed, almost as a rule, it would seem as though the best translation were in the margin, so that Dr. Vance Smith did well to call attention to "Margins," as well as "Texts." As to the spirit in which he writes, he says—

"The varied criticism to which the revised New Testament has been subjected has gone far to establish a conclusion of considerable importance,—one, too, which has been widely accepted even by persons of the most different theological opinions. It has led to a very general recognition of the substantial accuracy of the new text, regarded as the representative of the Greek original. A few instances may no doubt be pointed out in which this statement is open to question; but on the whole, notwithstanding various inconsistencies of rendering, and some faulty deviations from usual English idiom, it is acknowledged that the work of revision has been well done, and that it places before the modern reader the oldest original text which is now accessible to us more fully and literally than is done by the Authorised Version.

The result was to be anticipated. The revisers, as a body, were men of competent learning, and well acquainted with their subject; nor can they have any motive in their work but to

render their original faithfully to the best of their own understanding. This will probably be allowed by every reader of the corrected version who is at all competent to form an opinion on such a question.

At the same time it may be well to remember that even a body of such men was not infallible. Nor is there anything improbable in the supposition that they may have been influenced by the bias of their own theological opinions. It was at least natural, perhaps it was inevitable, that they should have been so. Whether there be any traces of this in their work, we need not at present stop to inquire. The reader will no doubt be able to make his own inferences on the point, as he proceeds with the following pages.

At all events, it will be seen that the changes which have been introduced in the revised version have, in several conspicuous instances, an important bearing upon theological doctrine, as usually derived from the New Testament. It is the design of the present Tract to point out some of these instances, and to offer a few remarks in elucidation of their theological import. I need not add that I wish to say what I have to say with every regard to literal fidelity, and with the desire to present each case honestly and truly, as it is, so far as I can myself appreciate its character. Without *bias*, I suppose I must not claim to be; but I will at least endeavour not to allow my own private opinions to influence me unduly; and it will always remain with the reader to judge for himself whether or not I have succeeded in giving a fairly true and impartial account of what I have undertaken here to discuss.

It will be convenient in what follows to take the passages to be noticed, with one or two exceptions, in the order in which they occur in the New Testament books. And it will be understood that it is only certain passages of prominent theological interest that it is proposed to notice.*

After taking the passages one by one, and commenting on them in a very interesting fashion, he sums up the results thus—

“Since the publication of the revised New Testament, it has been frequently said that the changes of translation which the work contains are of little importance from a doctrinal point of view;—in other words that the great doctrines of popular theology remain unaffected, untouched by the results of the revision. How far this assertion is correct, the careful reader of the foregoing pages will be able to judge for himself. To the writer any such statement appears to be in the most substantial sense contrary to the facts of the case, for the following reasons:—

(1) The only passage in the New Testament which seemed like a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, has been removed by the revisers as *spurious*.

(2) The sole Deity of the Father has been reaffirmed in a remarkable case in which the authorised version had singularly misrepresented the original words. ‘The only God’ of John v. 44, affords evidence equally strong and clear with that of John xvii. 3, that the writer of this Gospel could not have intended to represent Jesus, the Christ, or Messiah, or even the Logos in him, as God in the same high sense of Infinite and Eternal Being in which HE is so Who is ‘the Only True God.’ The margin of John i. 18, ‘God only begotten,’ used of the Logos, in no way lessens the force of this remark, but serves to strengthen it. An ‘only begotten God,’ a *deuteros theos* or ‘second God,’ could never have been intended by the Evangelist to be represented as *equal* to the Being whom he designates as ‘the only God.’ Indeed this highest of Names the same Evangelist carefully lets us see that Jesus, or the Logos speaking in him, disclaimed for himself, making himself simply ‘Son of God’ (John x. 35)—no doubt here in the Logos Messiah sense.

(3) The character of the baptismal formula is greatly altered by the simple substitution of the ‘into’ for ‘in’—shewing us that there could never have been, as people have commonly supposed, any ecclesiastical magic in the phrase ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ seeing that this phrase is not to be found in the New Testament at all,* and that the words simply express a change of mind, on the part of the convert, from disbelief or denial to the profession of the allegiance which constituted discipleship.

(4) One remarkable instance in which the epithet ‘God’ was given to Christ (1 Tim. iii. 16) has been excluded from the text, and others of similar kind are admitted by the Revision to be uncertain. See above, in Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; Tit. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 1. In both the last named texts the apparent support newly extended to orthodox theology by the change of translation is virtually recalled and nullified by those who offer it; the new rendering being shown to be doubtful, in other words, worthless, by the marginal admission, that the change was uncalled for and purely arbitrary. See above, §§ 11, 14, 16, 17.

(5) The only instance in the New Testament in which the religious worship or adoration of Christ was apparently implied, has been altered by the Revision: ‘At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,’ is now to be read ‘in the name;—See above, § 15. Moreover, no alteration of text, or of translation will be found anywhere to make up for this loss, as, indeed, it is well understood that the New Testament contains neither

*It should not be forgotten that this threefold formula is nowhere found in use in the N. T. All the baptisms in the Book of Acts are in confession of Christ simply—as Acts ii. 38, viii. 16, xix. 5.

precept or example which really sanction the religious worship of Jesus Christ.*

(6) The word 'Atonement' disappears from the New Testament, and so do the connected phrases, 'faith in his blood,' and 'for Christ's sake.' These so commonly used expressions are shewn to be misrepresentations of the force of the original words, such alterations evidently throwing the most serious doubt upon the important popular doctrine of which they have hitherto been a main or indispensable support.

The changes just enumerated are manifestly of great importance, and are they not wholly unfavourable to the popular theology? Many persons will deny this, but it is hard to see on what grounds they do so. Or, if it be true that the popular orthodoxy remains unaffected by *such* changes, the inference is unavoidable that popular orthodoxy must be very indifferent as to the nature of the foundation on which it stands.

But, indeed it is easy to see that it is not within the New Testament, but in the traditional creeds and other such documents, that the theology of the day finds its clearest exposition and its true strength. Hence it was hardly to be expected that any revision of the New Testament would be felt to have done it harm, whatever the light thrown from any source upon the interpretation of Scripture. The upholders of orthodox doctrine, Evangelical or Anglican, need not therefore be much troubled by the altered aspect which the Scriptures may assume in consequence. The idea of revising the standards has not yet been seriously entertained. Indeed legally speaking, an angel from heaven, much less a Revision Company, could not be allowed to touch an Athanasian Creed or a Schedule of doctrines in a chapel trust? But is this a position which those who profess to value the New Testament as the sole fountain of doctrinal truth can feel themselves quite happy to accept?—to be bound so unalterably to the ideas of the past, and unable to change anything, lest it should contradict, not the New Testament, but the Creed or the imposed Article, or the chapel trust deed, or the Confession of faith approved of old by a Church Assembly or a Conference?

Is it little then to be wondered at, that the doctrinal results of the Revision should be either lightly estimated, or altogether denied. Nevertheless, of one thing we may be sure in the light of advancing science and historical research the unlovely dogmatic temper will grad-

ually cease to exist, or be ashamed to show itself. Those in particular whom that temper inspires to judge others, and even to proclaim that they shall 'perish everlastingly' because they decline to profess what they do not believe—such persons will doubtless become more reticent as time passes, and as knowledge and right feeling increase. Meanwhile it is well that some few, though but a few, should still utter their protest, as occasion requires, against uncharitable assumptions and the manifold perversion of the words and the Spirit of Christ. This it may long be necessary to do. May those to whom it falls to do it discharge their duty faithfully, and so, amidst good or evil report, contribute in some humble measure to the early coming, and the surer establishment in the world, of the kingdom of God."

The little book is published by the British and Foreign Unitarian Society, at 1/-, and may be had at 16 Queen's Arcade, Donegall Place, for 10d, by post, 11d.

SELECTIONS.

"You are accustomed," Prince Bismarck once said to the Ultramontane party, (and his words apply more widely still) "to complain of oppression whenever not permitted to lord it over others." It is "persecution" to some people to be compelled to mind their own business.

Toleration is not the opposite of intoleration, but is the counterpart of it. Both are despotisms. The one assumes to itself the right of withholding liberty of conscience, and the other of granting it. . . . I do not believe that any two men, on what are called doctrinal points, think alike who think at all. It is only those who have not thought that appear to agree.

With respect to what are called denominations of religion, if every one is left to judge for his own religion, there is no religion that is wrong, but if they are to judge of each others' religion, there is no such thing as a religion that is right. . . . But with respect to religion itself, without regard to names, and as directing itself from the universal family of mankind to the Divine object of all adoration, it is man bringing to his Maker the fruits of his heart, and though these fruits may differ, the grateful tribute of every one is accepted. . . . To God, and not to man, are all men accountable on the score of religion.

. . . . Every religion is good that teaches man to be good, and I know of none that instructs him to be bad.

. . . . My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavouring to make their fellow mortals happy (for this is the only way in which we can serve God) will be happy hereafter, and that the wicked will meet with punishment. This is my opinion. It is consistent with my idea of God's justice, and with the reason that God has given me.—*Thomas Paine.*

* Some would find such sanction in the ideal description of the honour paid to the Lamb in the Book of Revelations, Capp. iv. v. But the praises of the Lamb here recorded are evidently not religious worship, in the high sense in which it is offered to 'Him that liveth for ever and ever;' nor can it be shewn that the author of this book intended to recommend the worship of the glorified Jesus to his disciples on earth, even supposing that, had he done so, he ought to be obeyed!

Nánac lay on the ground, absorbed in devotion, with his feet toward Mecca. A Moslem priest seeing him, cried, "Base Infidel, how dar'st thou turn thy feet towards the house of Allah?" Nánac answered, "and thou—turn them if thou can'st towards any spot where the awful house of God is not!"—*Persian Tradition.*

A heathen once said to Rabbi Meir, "Does it seem credible that God, whose majesty you assert, fills the universe, should have spoken from between the two staves in the ark of the sanctuary?"

In answer, Rabbi Meir held up before the heathen a large and a small looking-glass, in each of which the inquirer beheld his image.

"Now," said the Rabbi, "in each mirror your body is reduced to correspond with the size of the glass—should the same thing be impossible to God? The world is his large looking-glass, the sanctuary his small one."

Rabbi Meir's wife was as good and pious as her husband.

There dwelt in his neighbourhood some co-religionists who were followers of Greek customs, who annoyed the Rabbi very much. In his vexation he would have prayed to God to destroy them, but said Beruryah, his wife:

"Be mindful of the teachings of thy faith. Pray not that sinners may perish, but that the sin itself may disappear, and no opportunity for its practice remain."

During the Rabbi's absence from home two of his sons died. Their mother, hiding her grief, awaited the father's return, and then said to him:

"My husband, some time since two jewels of inestimable value were placed with me for safe keeping. He who left them with me called for them to-day, and I delivered them into his hands?"

"That is right," said the Rabbi, approvingly, "we must always return carefully and faithfully all that is placed in our care."

Shortly after this the Rabbi asked for his sons, and the mother taking him by the hand, led him gently to the chamber of death, there gazed upon his sons, and realizing the truth, wept bitterly.

"Weep not, beloved husband," said his noble wife; "did'st thou not say to me we must return cheerfully when 'tis called for, all that is placed in our care? God gave us these jewels. He left them with us for a time, and we gloried in their possession; but now that He calls for His own, we should not repine."

Rabbi Ishmael was one of the most prominent and excellent among the fathers of the Talmudical literature. His doctrines are pure, his ideas sublime, and his explanations clear and concise. He died a martyr to Roman persecution, and this end has set the seal of truth and conviction on all the actions and sayings of his life.

There is a historical immortality, as well as a spiritual immortality; Rabbi Ishmael has obtained the former, and he was a firm believer in the latter. They who imagine the doctrine of immortality to be an outgrowth of man's vanity, claiming for himself an imaginary preference above other creatures; they who

believe it be an ancient fiction, without which no courts of law would be able to check the natural proneness towards evil-doing, could never rise to the courage and sublimity of martyrdom. To Ishmael, common observation, as well as innate principles, proved the truth of his belief.

First, no atom of matter in the whole vastness of the universe is lost; how, then, can man's soul, which comprises the whole world in one idea, be lost?

Secondly, in all nature death is but a transformation; with the soul it is the portal to a new and higher realm.

Thirdly, our thoughts and feelings, emanating from the soul, are not of an earthly nature.

Rabbi Ishmael also advocated with energy the doctrine of man's free agency.

"When a man enters upon the path of truth and justice," said he, "God helps him forward, but when he chooses the way of sin, God says, 'I gave thee reason and free will, go thy way, even as the trader will wait upon the customer, who purchases a good and pleasant article,' while to one who desires pitch or sulphur, he says, 'Go, wait upon thyself.'"

Many ask, "Why does God permit so much corruption and evil?" Rabbi Ishmael answers, "Not God, but ye, yourselves, are the creators and supporters of moral evils. When a field is covered by weeds, shall a farmer complain to God? No, let him blame himself for his carelessness and neglect. Noble, indeed, is the feeling of the man who reflects that his virtue is his own work, and truly woeful is the profligate, who cannot but know that his guilt is his alone! 'To the pure help cometh from on high,' was the sentence which cheered our pious forefathers, and which should encourage us."

His definition of sin, too, is far beyond and above the confused ideas of many theologians.

"Sin is an obstruction in the heart; an inability to feel and comprehend all that is noble, true, and great, and to take part in the good." If man is to be freed from sin, his mind and heart must be opened to the influence of enlightenment. The power of the passions must be subdued, and all prejudice, selfishness, and self-complacency be removed. — (*Extracts from the Talmud.*)

MOUNTPOTTINGER MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

SEVENTH SESSION, 1881-2.

1882. PROGRAMME.
 Jan. 11—Lecture—"John Tyndall: Poet-Physicist," Rev. J. J. Wright.
 " 18—Bits from Books, chiefly American; interspersed with Music.
 25—Discussion—"Co-Operative Societies."
 Feb. 1—Lecture—"Rambles in Manxland,"—Rev. D. Thompson.
 " 8—Paper—"Depressions in Trade, their Causes and Remedies,"—Richard Carroll.
 " 15—Discussion—"Are Trades Unions Just or Natural?"
 " 22—Paper—"How did we come to have a Parliament?"—J. H. Gilliland.
 March 1—Lecture—"Life and Genius of Edgar Allen Poe," Rev. F. Thomas.
 " 8—Paper—"Mary, Queen of Scots,"—J. N. Hardy.
 " 15—Lecture—"Charles Waterton, the Naturalist—At Home and Abroad,"—Rev. W. S. Smith.
 " 22—Paper—"Social Cohesion, or on What Terms may Society hold together?"—Blakely Kennedy.
 " 29—Annual Meeting.

Chair to be taken each evening at Eight o'clock.

JAMES M'QUOID, Hon. Sec.

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- TRANSYLVANIAN RECOLLECTIONS.** By Andrew Chalmers. Smart & Son, London. It may be had at the Depository for 2/4.
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- THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.** By O. B. Frothingham. Third Edition. New York. May be had at the Depository for 6/6.
- JESUS OF NAZARETH AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.** May be had at the Depository for 10d.
- THE LEGEND OF THOMAS DIDYMUS.** By James Freeman Clarke, Boston, U.S. May be had at the Depository for 5/6.
- Any book or Periodical may be obtained at the Depository, 16 Queen's Arcade, Donegall Place.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The Treasurer of the Unitarian Society begs to acknowledge receipt of the following Subscriptions:—
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ROSEMARY STREET MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION TENTH SESSION, 1881-82.

The Committee have much pleasure in announcing the following Programme until the end of the Session:—

1882.	
Jan'y.	9—Soiree and Welcome to the President
"	16—Paper, "Hamburg in Summer & Winter," Mr. H. Aston
"	23—Paper, "The Irish Agitation, from an English point of view," Mr. A. J. Liversedge.
"	30—Lecture, "Other inhabited Worlds," Mr. R. Hooke.
Feb'y.	6—Paper, "Oratory and Orators," Mr. Murray Blair.
"	13—Music and Readings.
"	20—Paper, "Pseudo Republicanism," Mr. F. D. F. O'Connor.
"	27—Lecture, "Seneca," Rev. J. A. Kelly.
March	6—Paper, "The Present Age," Mr. Wm. Beck.
"	13—Concert.
"	20—Discussion, "Should the House of Lords be abolished?"
"	27—Lecture, "Protection and Free Trade," Mr. M. Vietel.
April	3—Paper, "Funeral Customs & Reform," Mr. D. H. Brown.
"	10—Easter Monday—no meeting.
"	17—Miscellaneous Original Compositions
May	1—Soiree and Annual Business Meeting.

The meetings are held on Monday evenings at 8 o'clock, in the Rosemary Street Schools.

Admission—To Lectures, Members Free; Non-Members, Sixpence each; to Papers, and to Music and Readings, Free.

Members' Subscription, Four Shillings per annum, which includes the use of the Library.

The Reading Room is open daily from 8 a.m. till 10 p.m., and the papers and periodicals to be supplied for the year 1882 will be sold on Monday evening, 16th January.

WILLIAM R. STITT } Hon Secs.
FRANCIS E. DALE }

NOTE THE NEW ADDRESS—

UNITARIAN DEPOSITORY,
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